

THE HISTORY  
OF  
BETHEL BAPTIST  
CHURCH  
1962 - 1987

Volume II



BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

January 1963 - March 1987

These writings are intended to chronicle the events in the life of the Bethel Baptist Church since The History of Bethel Baptist Church, most ably authorized by Mrs. W.W. Taylor and published in 1962. That book concluded with the celebration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Church.

It has now been almost twenty-five years since the close of that book. Bethel Baptist Church has continued its work in Bethel and the surrounding community. The Centennial Celebration of Bethel Baptist Church is at hand, and it is necessary to chronicle the events of the past twenty-five years. The life of the Church has been varied. There have been periods of growth, and periods of less growth. This writing is intended to trace the progress of the Church in the Bethel Community.

This history is an effort of many persons. Much research was done, and sincere appreciation to each individual who helped is extended.



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Reverend M.F. Eiland (1962 - 1966)

Reverend Eiland and his family continued their work in the Bethel Baptist Church and community with the vigor and enthusiasm described in the final paragraphs of The History of the Bethel Baptist Church.

Mr. John Elliott of Greenville, North Carolina, an East Carolina College student, was employed as a Choir Director in October 1963. Mr. Elliott's salary was \$55.00 per month. He served until April 27, 1964.

Reverend Eiland and John Mayo, Jr. were elected as messengers to the State Baptist Convention in Fall 1963.

A personal friend of Rev. Eiland's and Professor of Speech and Homilectics at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of Louisville, Kentucky, Dr. Charles A. McGlon, was the guest minister for the Spring 1964 revival.

Mrs. Irene Mayo resigned as Church Organist effective May 10, 1964. Mrs. Mayo had performed faithful and capable service in that capacity for forty years (1924 - 1964). She was honored on December 12, 1965 by the Church with the special Christmas music and family members were present. A brass hand rail with a plaque was presented in her honor.

Mr. Michael Howe, of the First Baptist Church of Hamlet, N.C. and a student at East Carolina University, was hired in May 1964 as an Organist-Choir Director. Mr. Howe's salary was \$1000.00 per year. He served in this capacity until August 9, 1965. This was the first instance of an organist and choir director position in Bethel Baptist Church.



The Nominating Committee for Church Officers for the 1964 - 65 church year was composed of: Bill Whichard, Chairman; Lucille Andrews; Frances Davis; Willie Dunning; Walter Whitley; and Walter Bunch. Ernest Alexander served as Sunday School Superintendent and Hilton Tetterton as Sunday School Secretary. James Smith and Walter Bunch were elected as Deacons, Frances Davis was elected as Church Clerk, and James Dupree as Treasurer.

July 1965, Linwood Briley was nominated as deacon to fill an unexpired term.

Miss Carolyn Bivins, of East Carolina College, was employed as Organist-Choir Director effective in October 3, 1965. Miss Bivins served the Bethel Baptist Church for ten months, resigning in August 1966 due to school work.

Church officers elected for the Church year 1965 - 1966 included: Mitchell Alexander as a new Deacon (he was ordained 10-10-65); Frances Davis as Clerk; James Dupree as Treasurer; Billy Barnhill as Sunday School Superintendent; and Hilton Tetterton as Sunday School Secretary.

The South Roanoke Baptist Association held one of its two meetings for the Annual Fall Session at the Bethel Baptist Church. Our invitation had been accepted months in advance and it was an honor to host this meeting on October 20, 1965.

During the week of 2/27/66 - 3/14/66, a special program was held at Bethel Baptist Church and five surrounding Baptist Churches. "The School of Missions" consisted of a two hour session each night. One hour was devoted to a study course for each age group in the





Church, and the second hour was utilized by a visiting missionary, to entertain and educate the members. The visiting missionaries rotated at each church, so that each church had the benefit of a different missionary each session. This program proved to be an excellent one and was fondly remembered by the church participants.

Rev. and Mrs. Eiland were elected messengers on April 19, 1966 to the Southern Baptist Convention to be held in Detroit, Michigan, during the week of May 15, 1966.

On February 2, 1966. Rev. Eiland brought a recommendation from the Deacons that a Church Constitution be established for Bethel Baptist Church. A committee was named to formulate a constitution: Rev. M.F. Eiland, Mrs. Bonnie Taylor, Mr. James Dupree, Mr. Linwood Briley, Mrs. Linwood Briley, Mrs. Joe Davis, Mr. Billy Barnhill, Mr. W.C. Whitley, all presently serving as the Church Council; Mr. M.H. Alexander, Mr. W.H. Whichard, Mr. C.E. Brown, Mr. Walter Bunch, Mr. Bob Bowers, and Mr. Jimmy Smith all active Deacons; and Mr. John Mayo, Mrs. Roy James, Mrs. Bob Bowers, Mrs. W.O. Grives, Mrs. Hilda Carson, Mrs. Frances Rowlette, Mr. Kelly Abeyounis, Mrs. Hight Weeks, Mrs. Anne Eiland, and Mrs. Elizabeth Andrews, members at large. This great task was brought to fruition with a Constitution for Bethel Baptist Church.

On August 7, 1966, Rev. M.F. Eiland tendered his resignation, to be effective September 10, 1966. He was from Texas, and returned there, to Houston, to accept a fellowship for further graduate study at the Univeristy of Houston.

Interim Period (September 1966 - August 1967)

The church body approved the employment of David and Brenda Traynham as Organist and Choir



Director on September 21, 1966. The salary for the first contract period, a year, was \$85.00 per month, and the contract was renewed. The Traynhams served Bethel Baptist Church well for almost two years. They were honored with a covered dish supper on 7-14-68. Mr. Traynham had finished his studies at East Carolina College and both he and Mrs. Traynham were to teach in the public schools in the fall.

Church officers were elected at the quarterly meeting on 9-21-66. Mrs. Hilda Carson chaired the Nominating Committee. Joe Davis, Irvin Taylor, James Dupree, and John Mayo were elected as Deacons. Frances Davis was re-elected as Clerk and James Dupree as Treasurer. Billy Barnhill served as Sunday School Superintendent and Hilton Tetterton served as Sunday School Secretary.

Dr. Carroll Trotter was called as an interim pastor.

The October 1966 revival was conducted by a good and familiar friend, the Rev. L.D. Holt, who began his work on the church field at Bethel Baptist Church in 1943.

On October 15, 1966, a Pulpit Committee was appointed to search for a full-time pastor. Hilton Tetterton served as Chairman. Members were Mrs. C.B. Rowlette, Jo Anne Tetterton, Mrs. C.X. James, Kelly Abeyounis. James Dupree and Eldon Coltrain were alternates.

On January 9, 1967, the Bethel Baptist Church was advised that Mattie Grimes Mayo had bequeathed \$2,500.00 to the church "to be spend on improving the present building and that a plaque be put in some appropriate place indicating that this work was done



'In loving memory of Exum L. Mayo, Sr., Robert Joseph Mayo, and Exum L. Mayo, Jr. by Mattie Grimes Mayo'."

Rev. Arthur J. Herron (September 1967 - August 1970)

Bethel Baptist Church called Rev. Arthur Herron, from Spindale, N.C. Rev. Herron and his wife, Jane, were active with the youth in the Church and community. Many activities were held - cook outs, beach retreats, even art displays and folk singing in McWhorter Park. The youth in the community participated in the enthusiastic service of the Herrons in the Bethel community.

Church officers for 1967 - 1968 were elected at a quarterly business conference held on September 27, 1967. Mrs. Bonnie Taylor served as Chairman of the Nominating Committee and presented the slate of officers. Hilton Tetterton was elected as a new Deacon, and John Mayo was elected Deacon. Frances Davis was re-elected as Clerk and James Dupree as Treasurer. Billy Barnhill was again elected as Sunday School Superintendent and Hilton Tetterton, again as Sunday School Secretary.

Aluminum rails on the south and east steps have been installed as of April 24, 1968.

At the July 1968 quarterly business meeting, a motion to hire Mrs. Gail McCrakin was made. She is a student at East Carolina University.

The Fall Revival was held November 17 - 24th. with Dr. Carroll Trotter, who served Bethel Baptist Church, as interim pastor before Rev. Herron was called, was the guest minister.

Rewiring of the Church and the installation of five chandeliers in the sanctuary occurred in October 1968. This work was sorely needed,





and was the culmination of much planning and figuring. The Properties Committee, chaired by Mitchell Alexander, worked long and hard on the projects to maintain and enhance the church property.

Church officers for 1968 - 1969 were elected at a quarterly business meeting, held on September 25, 1968. Mrs. Bonnie Taylor, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers to the church body. B.F. Manning was elected to the Board of Deacons. James Dupree served as Chairman of the Board of Deacons. Frances Davis and James Dupree were again elected to the positions of Clerk and Treasurer. Mitchell Alexander was elected to service as Sunday School Superintendent and Hilton Tetterton was re-elected as Sunday School Secretary.

Rev. Herron, James Dupree, and Mrs. Estelle Harris were elected as messengers to the State Baptist Convention in Raleigh, November 11, 12, and 13, 1968.

In May 1969, Rev. Herron advised the church body that two candelabra had been received. One was given by the graduating class commemorating Tommy Batchelor, a member who was killed in action in Vietnam. One was given by friends of H.L. Rives, Sr. Memorial gifts of song books have been given for Mrs. Nancy Young and W.R. Hunnicutt.

The Board of Deacons made a resolution honoring "Doc" H.L. Rives for his dedicated service during his life, to the Bethel Baptist Church and to the Bethel community. This resolution was sent to the Rives family, the "Biblical Recorder", "Charity and Children" and published in a state and local paper. Mr. Rives passed away on April 2, 1969.





Church officers for 1969 - 1970 were elected at a quarterly business meeting on September 24, 1969. Lynnette Bowers, as Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the nominations. Ernest Alexander, Lynwood Briley, and Bill Whichard were elected as Deacons. Frances Davis again served as Clerk. James Dupree again served as Treasurer. James Ayers was elected as Chairman of the Finance Committee. Mitchell Alexander was re-elected as Sunday School Superintendent. Hilton Tetterton was re-elected as Secretary.

On September 24, 1969, Mr. Mark Gerhardt was called as Organist-Choir Director. Mr. Gerhardt was paid \$1200.00 per year for his services.

Also on September 24, 1969, a resolution was made expressing gratitude to James Dupree, John Mayo, and Irvin Taylor.

On January 21, 1970, a motion of appreciation was made to James Dupree for his years of service as Church Treasurer upon the occasion of his resignation and Frances Davis was elected to complete the term.

Mr. D.L. Baker's gift of a new Pulpit Bible was accepted by vote on April 22, 1970. At this meeting, Mr. and Mrs. Carey Brown were appointed messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in Denver, Colorado.

Rev. Herron tendered his resignation to the church on July 16, 1970. He had accepted a call to the First Baptist Church in Raleigh, as Associate Minister and Minister to Youth. Rev. Herron's resignation was effective August 15, 1970.

Interim Period (August 1970 - April 1971)



A Pulpit Committee was seated, upon the vote of the church body in September 1970. Jo Anne Tetterton chaired this committee. Members included Hilton Tetterton, Lynnette Bowers, Eldon Coltrain, Brenda Williams, Corinne Heath, and Mrs. Roy James.

Mr. Howard Dawkins was called as interim pastor. Rev. Dawkins is from Greenville, N.C. The vote occurred on September 23, 1970. The duties were described as holding Sunday morning services, weddings and funerals, and be available for emergencies. He graciously served until July 1971.

Officers for 1971 - 1971 were elected. Bob Bowers and Eldon Coltrain were elected as new Deacons. Frances Davis was re-elected as Clerk and Treasurer. Bill Whichard was elected as Sunday School Superintendent, and Hilton Tetterton as Secretary.

Air conditioning was installed in the church in May 1971.

The church body voted on April 21, 1971, to call Rev. Curtis Tyler, from Church Roads, Virginia. A salary of \$8500.00 was approved. Rev. Tyler was pastor of the Central Baptist Church, and came to Bethel Baptist Church in July 1971.

Rev. Curtis Tyler (July 1971 - May 1976)

Mr. William C. Whitley was employed as Organist-Choir Director of Bethel Baptist Church in October 1971. No date of his resignation is available, but it is believed that he served until the summer of 1973.

Church officers for 1971 - 1972 were elected on September 22, 1971. James Ayers and Mahlon



Edmondson were elected as new Deacons. Frances Davis was again elected as Clerk and Treasurer. Church Trustees are James Dupree, Bob Cullifer, and John Mayo. Bill Whichard was elected as Sunday School Superintendent and Hilton Tetterton as Secretary.

Rev. Tyler was elected as messenger on November 14, 1971 to the State Baptist Convention to be held in Charlotte on November 23, 1971.

A Spring Revival was held April 23 - 30, 1972. The Rev. James Tate, from Dillon, S.C. was guest minister.

The church body voted to accept an anonymous gift to have cushions made for the pews, on July 2, 1972. Later, due to difficulty in having the cushions made, the decision was changed to having the pews upholstered, and such was accomplished during 1972.

On October 18, 1972, at the quarterly business meeting, the church officers for 1972 - 1973 were elected. Lorena Andrews was elected Clerk, and Frances Davis was elected Treasurer. The Sunday School Superintendent position's name changed to Director of Sunday School. Linwood Briley was elected to this post. Hilton Tetterton was elected as Secretary.

The Nominating Committee properly requested a special meeting for Constitution and By-Law amendments on September 3, 1972. The major change was the manner in which the Church elected Deacons. Blank ballots are distributed, tellers tally the votes, with those individuals receiving the highest number of votes being asked to serve as Deacons for a three-year rotating term.

On January 17, 1973, a motion was approved





to place hearing stations in the sanctuary for those with hearing problems, a speaker for the nursery, and a new outside bulletin board.

For several years, Bethel Baptist Church had been participating in union services on Sunday evenings. These services were shared with the Bethel United Methodist Church and the Bethel Pentecostal Holiness Church. On April 25, 1973, the church body voted to invite both churches to participate in union worship services on Sunday evenings during the summer months of June, July, and August. The Bethel United Methodist Church and Bethel Baptist Church still participate in this practice to date.

On August 5, 1973, Ms. Susan Cassidy was called as interim Organist-Choir Director for Bethel Baptist Church.

On August 15, 1973, Billy Barnhill, Chairman of the Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers for the church year 1973 - 1974. Lorena Andrews was elected as Clerk, Frances Davis as Treasurer, Mahlon Edmondson as Sunday School Director, and Hilton Tetterton continued in his long held post as Sunday School Secretary.

At the October 17, 1973 quarterly business meeting, motions that were passed included having a Homecoming Service with dinner on the grounds November 4, 1973 as part of the Bethel Centennial, and initiating a drive to acquire at least 25 feet of property on the South side of the church, all the way from Main to James Street. In January, 1975, the Board of Trustees and Pastor were seated as a buying committee to bid on the property of the Pitt County Board of Education at the 3-21-75 auction.

On June 5, 1974, a special meeting was called to employ Ms. Catherine Finklea as Choir Director. The action was approved.





On August 14, 1974, Church officers for 1974 - 1975 were duly elected. Lorena Andrews Clerk and Frances Davis, Treasurer were re-elected. Billy Barnhill was elected as Sunday School Director and Hilton Tetterton as Secretary.

A Young Couples Class was officially formed to encourage interest in Sunday School and participation by young couples on October 16, 1974.

The balcony of the Church was carpeted and painted with help from members who worked diligently.

Bob Bowers presented the Nominating Committee's slate of officers for 1975 - 1976 on August 20, 1975. Of the officers elected to serve, Lorena Andrews, Clerk, and Frances Davis, Treasurer, were re-elected, as were Linwood Briley, Sunday School Director and Hilton Tetterton, Secretary.

Bethel Baptist Church was advised by letter at its quarterly business meeting on April 21, 1976 that Rev. Curtis Tyler intended to resign effective May 23, 1976. He was called to a church in the Durham area. Rev. Tyler worked diligently for almost five years in the Bethel Baptist Church and community. He and his family labored with the members of the congregation in times of inflation, financial difficulty and still managed to make gains in the Lord's work in the community.

Interim Period (May 1976 - February 1977)

A Pulpit Committee was empaneled May 16, 1976 to search for a new pastor. James Dupree, Claudia Ayers, Paul Cullifer, William Abeyounis, Hilda Alexander, Mitchell Alexander and Mr. C.X. James served faithfully.

Rev. James Rawls of Tarboro, N.C. was called as Interim Pastor July 21, 1976, at a salary



of \$100.00 per week. Rev. Rawls was accepted for membership in the Bethel Baptist Church by letter at the close of his first service.

On September 23, 1976, Church officers for 1976 - 1977 were elected. Billy Barnhill presented the slate of officers. Major officers were re-elected: Lorena Andrews, Clerk, Frances Davis, Treasurer; Linwood Briley, Sunday School Director; and Hilton Tetterton as Sunday School Secretary.

The purchase of a tape recorder and tapes to tape Sunday services for the use of those that are homebound was approved. This was a large part of the outreach program.

Authority to negotiate with Barrus Construction Company was given to Bob Bowers and Walter Gray, to curb and pave with asphalt areas to the rear of the church. The expenditure was not to exceed \$2000. The work required an additional \$700 which was donated anonymously, and was completed in the summer of 1977.

Rev. Norman Joyner (February 1977 - June 1985)

A unanimous vote of the church body was recorded on February 27, 1977 to call Rev. Norman Joyner to serve as Pastor. Rev. Joyner is from Statesville, N.C.

On March 2, 1977, a meeting was called to consider the recommendations of the Properties Committee regarding whether to renovate the old parsonage or tear it down.

A picture directory was compiled of the church membership in July 1977. This is a record that is significant and meaningful to the membership. Many old friends are remembered through this directory.



Church officers for 1977 - 1978 were elected. Sandra Jones was elected Clerk, and Frances Davis re-elected as Treasurer. Billy Barnhill was elected Sunday School Director and Hilton Tetterton continued as Secretary.

Randall and Belinda Bryant were hired as Church Music Directors on January 22, 1978. A motion was also approved to hire Brenda Howard as Church Secretary.

On April 20, 1978 it was decided that the Fall Revival would be an annual event and would be held each year in October.

A gift of a portable communion set was accepted from Grimes and Schumann Beverly on April 20, 1978.

A decision to renovate the old parsonage into living quarters for Randall and Belinda Bryant Directors of Church Music, was made by the Church Council on May 5, 1978. The housing was made available to the Bryants free of charge. The Bryants served until May 1979.

A meeting was held October 15, 1978 to elect the officers for the Church year 1978 - 79. A record of these officers is not available; however, the minutes state that new deacons were announced. These were Bob Bowers, Eldon Coltrain, and Kelly Abeyounis. Alice Coburn was elected Clerk.

At the October 18, 1978 meeting, the church body heard that the loan on the present church parsonage had been paid off, and there were only two or three more payments of the loan in which the old parsonage was security. A motion to pay off that outstanding loan was made, and a "Note Burning" was held during the Homecoming Services on October 29, 1978.





A gift of a brass pedestal to be used for holding flowers in the sanctuary from the children of Mollie E. Bullock, and in her honor, was accepted April 18, 1979. A \$500 gift from Elizabeth Briley was accepted for the purpose of placing plexiglass over the South window of stained glass.

Repairs to the guttering on the Church building, and painting of the dome and exterior wood portion of the Church was done in July 1979.

Don Greene, a student at East Carolina University, from Hamlet, N.C., was called July 11, 1979 as Director of Music. He is to live in the old parsonage rent free and be paid a salary of \$35.00 a week.

On August 22, 1979, the Properties Committee noted donations from Mr. and Mrs. Leo Sutton and Mr. and Mrs. B.C. Gardner, Jr. to place plexiglass on the East stained glass window for protection and conservation.

Eldon Coltrain, as Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the proposed church officers for 1979 - 80 in a called meeting on September 19, 1979. Alice Cobern was elected as Clerk, Frances Davis as Treasurer. Bill Whichard was elected as Sunday School Director, and B.F. Manning was elected as Secretary.

The gift of a silver communion set from Marshall Tetterton, in memory of Mr. H.L. Tetterton, Sr. was accepted October 31, 1979.

The area behind the pulpit, baptismal pool, the stairs and the open area upstairs was carpeted as a memorial to Lionel Parker in the early part of 1980.

On September 24, 1980, Church officers were elected. Alice Coburn was again elected as Clerk. Frances Davis was again elected as





Treasurer. Bill Whichard and B.F. Manning were again elected as Superintendent and Secretary of the Sunday School.

All the windows in the church were covered with glass, either plexiglass or plate glass. There are seventy-two windows in the Church. These windows are beautiful stained glass. The preservation of these windows, their restoration and repair, is an act of which the Church can be proud. This part of our heritage cannot be replaced, only preserved. The work was accomplished in late 1980 or early 1981.

A donation for furniture and carpet in the larger area of the basement was accepted on December 23, 1980.

Church officers for 1981 - 1982 were elected. Dot Keel was elected Clerk and Alvis Mewborn was elected Treasurer of the Church. Bill Whichard and B.F. Manning continued in their positions as Superintendent and Secretary of the Sunday School.

Rev. Joyner was elected as a messenger to the State Baptist Convention in November, 1981.

Approval of funds and a bid for a new roof on the old parsonage was given July 21, 1982.

On July 21, 1982, Brenda Howard was authorized to begin an Acteens program and Holly Tetterton to begin Mission Friends.

Church officers for 1982 - 1983 were elected. Dot Keel and Alvis Mewborn were re-elected to the offices of Clerk and Treasurer. Linwood Briley was elected Sunday School Superintendent and B.F. Manning continued as Secretary.

Rev. Joyner was messenger to the State Baptist Convention in Fayetteville, N.C.



Spring Revival was held March 20 - 25, 1983, with Rev. Justus McKeel as guest evangelist. Rev. McKeel was ordained in Bethel Baptist Church in 1960.

During July 1983, the sanctuary of the Church was redecorated. The entire sanctuary was painted, new carpet laid, and a kneeling bench and rail constructed. Services were held at the Bethel Elementary School during the period from June 24 through July 15. The discomfort of being out of our sanctuary was quickly forgotten, however, when the congregation returned to the beautiful sanctuary with cream walls and thick, mauve carpeting.

Major church officers for 1983 - 1984 were re-elected in September 1984.

Fall Révival began the first Sunday in October. Rev. Bob Robbins of Trinity Baptist Church in Tarboro was the guest evangelist. Special music was provided by Randall and Belinda Bryant, former Directors of Music, and George Stone, former organist.

Church officers were elected for 1984 - 1985 in September 1984. Dot Keel was elected as Clerk and Alvis Mewborn as Treasurer. Bill Whichard was elected Superintendent of Sunday School and Garland Whitehurst was elected as Secretary.

In a meeting on October 17, 1984, the window by the choir, facing east, was set apart in honor of Mr. and Mrs. John Mayo, and their names, dates, and special ministries were indicated in lettering at the base of the window.

On April 14, 1985, Rev. Norman Joyner announced his intention to resign from the pastorate, effective June 30, 1985.



Rev. Joyner planned to return to Statesville and retire from full time service on the church field.

The church body voted on May 1, 1985 to accept the duly appointed Pulpit Committee. The Committee consisted of ten members: Mitchell Alexander, Clint James, Hight Weeks, Bob Martin, Sue Martin, David Lee, Shelby Rogister, Bethany Bullock, Carolyn Johnson and Brenda Howard. The Pulpit Committee elected Brenda Howard as Chairman.

Interim Period (July 1985 - January 1987)

In August 1985, Terry Griffiths and B.F. Manning were elected as Deacons to fill the unexpired terms of Bob Bowers and Leo Sutton, who had resigned.

The Church body voted to call Rev. Dave Turner as Interim Pastor on August 25, 1985. Rev. Turner is from Wilson, N.C. and served faithfully and well until December 31, 1986. This was a long relationship and occurred under difficult circumstances, but the Bethel Baptist Church was strengthened with Rev. Turner's efforts, and under his guidance, as he felt he was led by the Holy Spirit, and spent much time in prayer for the Church.

Church officers for 1985 - 86 were elected September 25, 1986. Re-elections were again made in the major offices. Dot Keel was elected Clerk, and Alvis Mewborn was elected as Treasurer. In Sunday School offices, Bill Whichard was re-elected as Superintendent and B.F. Manning as Secretary.

On October 6, 1985, Dr. Buford Calvin Sellers was invited to come for a trial sermon and fellowship in consideration of a call to the





pastorate of the Bethel Baptist Church. Dr. Sellers was from Oakland Baptist Church in Oakland, Mississippi. He served as minister on November 14, 1985 and made a very favorable impression upon the church body. Dr. Sellers was extended a call upon a unanimous vote on November 24, 1985; however, it was agreed that he would begin his ministry in Bethel in July of 1986. Dr. Sellers was retiring from both his pastorate at Oakland Baptist Church and as principal of the Coffeerville Elementary School, as he had served in both capacities for twenty years.

Bethel Baptist Church participated in the "Good News, America" revival in March 1986, simultaneously with Baptist churches across the United States. This effort was successful and enjoyable.

In anticipation of the coming of a new pastor, it was apparent that some renovation of the parsonage was necessary. The Properties Committee, Board of Deacons, and church body, worked together to improve the property. The roof was replaced, the parsonage painted inside and outside, and new carpet laid. This work occurred in the Spring of 1986.

Don Greene submitted a letter of resignation as Director of Music April 23, 1986. This was to become effective July 20, 1986, but he graciously consented to remain until a suitable replacement could be found.

Rev. Turner was elected as messenger to the Southern Baptist Convention June 10, 11, and 12, 1986.

Dennis Langley was elected Deacon to fill Terry Griffith's unexpired term, and was ordained June 15, 1986.





On Sunday, June 29, 1986, Rev. Turner had the sad duty of informing the church body that Dr. Buford Sellers had been stricken that morning with a heart attack. Dr. Sellers had been ready to move to Bethel, and preach his final sermon at Oakland Baptist Church when he suffered the heart attack. The Church held special prayer for him and his family, but a call was received during the worship service that Dr. Sellers had passed away. In addition to the christian love and sympathy for Dr. Sellers' family, the Bethel Baptist Church was also in grief, and many prayers were made. Dr. Sellers was to have married on July 5, 1986, and come to our pulpit on July 13, 1986.

A new Pulpit Committee was elected on July 16, 1986. Members were; Dennis Langley, Phillip Abeyounis, Faye Lewis, Cynthia Strickland, Joyce Manning, Jackie Wooten and Mitchell Alexander (as ex-officio member).

Church officers for 1986 - 87 were elected September 24, 1986. Bill Whichard, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers. Dot Keel was elected as Clerk and Bobbie Tetterton as Treasurer. Ronnie Cullipher was elected as Sunday School Superintendent and B.F. Manning as Secretary.

Ronnie Cullipher was elected as a new Deacon and was ordained in October 1986.

Rev. Turner was elected as messenger to the State Baptist Convention in November 1986.

Rev. Turner tendered his resignation, effective 12-28-86. Bethel Baptist Church is grateful for Rev. Turner's interest and enthusiams for outreach and community efforts, and for his service.



Don Greene had remained in his capacity as Director of Music past his resignation date to allow the church to find someone else. However, he also resigned December 28, 1986. His unselfish service for seven years was recognized at a dinner at Parker's Restaurant in January 1987. Many memorable specials, cantatas, and performances are attributed to Mr. Greene's skill, talent, and patience. The Bethel Baptist Church is grateful for his service.

At the January 14, 1987 quarter business meeting, a motion was made by Lynnette Bowers, from the Music Committee, to hire Margaret Cannon of Bethel, N.C. as Music Director. The motion carried and Margaret Cannon was hired as the Church's new Music Director.

A five member committee, formed by the Deacons, consisting of one member from each organization of the church, was organized to check into fixing up the old parsonage on January 14, 1987.

Rev. Kevin C. Morgan of Wake Forest, N.C. was called to the church field on January 25, 1987 after a unanimous vote of the church body. Rev. Morgan had preached a trial sermon on January 18, 1987.

We now look forward to the Centennial Celebration and future growth in the community of Bethel and in God's service. We have traced our path, and now must make a new trail. We humbly ask God's guidance and Spiritual leading in these efforts.

March 1, 1987











